



The Business Case for Wildlife Habitat Commitments

Performance Track Tele-Seminar Summary

September 30, 2003

Speakers

- Bob Johnson, Executive Vice President, Wildlife Habitat Council
- Greer Tidwell, Director of Environmental Management, Bridgestone/Firestone
- Ron Shifflett, [job title], Invista Corporation
- Gary Schardt, Industrial Engineer, Rockwell Collins

Topic Summary

This tele-seminar explored how a commitment to create or improve wildlife habitat makes sense from a business perspective, providing such benefits as lower maintenance costs, reduced remediation costs for brownfields, improved community relations, better employee morale, and enhanced brand reputation and recognition.. There were approximately 20 participants.

Key Points from Main Presentation

- **Environmental Case:** Habitat loss and degradation are the #1 cause of species declines, and account for 90 percent of all bird population decline. *(Slide 3 in presentation)*
- **The Need for Industry Involvement:** Corporations own or manage 1/3 of the land base in the contiguous United States. Public reserves alone are not enough to protect and restore species. *(Slide 4 in presentation)*
- **Business Case 1: Supporting Business Values and Corporate Goals:** Habitat enhancement supports “triple bottom line” strategies; supports EMS by providing economic, environmental, and community relations benefits; helps meet requirements of excellence programs (e.g. Performance Track, ISO 14001). Also may enhance brand reputation and recognition, address shareholder activism concerns, and help businesses compete for new talent. *(Slides 5-6 and 25 in presentation)*
- **Business Case 2: Economic Benefits:** Habitat enhancement may bring direct economic benefits in the form of reduced land maintenance costs, revenue generated from woodlot management, reduced tax base, cost savings in brownfield site remediation, or other benefits. *(Slides 7-16 in presentation)*
- **Business Case 3: Improving Community Relations:** Wildlife habitat projects provide opportunity for community involvement and education, building trust and better relationships with the community. Example: PPG facility in Monroe,

Examples of Economic Benefits

—Converting monoculture turf to meadow could reduce annual maintenance costs from \$1,000/acre to \$150/acre *

—DuPont Asturias (Spain) saved \$6 million by using a grassed waterway instead of concrete for storm water.

*U.S. EPA 1999, Landscaping with Native Plants

Pennsylvania, set up a wildflower meadow and designed a curriculum around the Monarch butterfly. This led to the development of a similar program at one of PPG's facilities in Mexico, where the butterflies overwinter. Information and teachers are being exchanged between the two sites. *(Slides 17-21 in presentation)*

- **Business Case 4: Improving Employee Morale:** Habitat improvements are correlated with higher morale. Habitat projects also provide professional development opportunities for plant environmental staff. *(Slides 22-23 in presentation)*

Building Corporate Support

Greer Tidwell gave a corporate perspective on wildlife habitat improvements. At Bridgestone/Firestone, wildlife habitat projects are done at the grassroots level, but they are seeded with top-down support from corporate. Because corporate is informed about habitat improvement projects at all its facilities, it can help a new projects by providing in-house experts or experienced staff. Tidwell emphasized that habitat improvement projects can provide important professional development opportunities, which can help sell the case to corporate. Bob Johnson noted that the employees have an "incredible" desire to help with habitat improvement projects. "Just a little push from corporate is often all that's needed. The employees contribute more than you could pay them."

Process

Greer Tidwell and Bob Johnson noted that the Wildlife Habitat Council can advise and help facilities in setting up wildlife habitats, providing biologists, expertise, and site assessments. The council accredits habitats and rewards facilities by promoting and publicizing their achievements.

Examples of Successful Projects

Ron Shifflett described a stream cleanup project at his DuPont Textiles (now Invista) plant. The facility set aside and certified 100 acres as wildlife habitat area in 1990. They set up a nature trail and formed the DuPont Wildlife Club, involving plant staff and the community. The club monitored bluebird populations and runs an annual river cleanup with 250 volunteers (employees, contractors, community members), hauling out 2,500 pounds of trash. The program has generated good publicity and camaraderie with the community. The facility is now working with Trout Unlimited and the local government to improve trout habitat in the river.

Gary Schardt described Rockwell Collins's trumpeter swan program at its facility in Bellevue, Iowa. During the facility's effort to achieve ISO14001 certification, employees saw in a newspaper article that the Iowa Department of Natural Resources was looking for partners to help reintroduce trumpeter swans to the state. Rockwell Collins contacted the state and began participating in the program. The effort has produced four years of successful hatchings, with the cygnets reintroduced to the wild. The project has helped the facility with community relations, employee morale, and Performance Track and ISO 14001 commitments.

Resources for More Information

- Bob Johnson's presentation (PDF):
<http://www.epa.gov/performance-track/members/seminar.htm>

- Wildlife Habitat Council Web site: <http://www.wildlifehc.org/>
- WHC Brownfields page: <http://www.wildlifehc.org/brownfields/index.cfm>
- Video/DVD documenting a wildlife habitat project led by Phil McCowan of Dayton Tire, including interviews with government officials expressing their support for the project. Requests for the video should be directed to Dayna Greenberg at:
greenberg.dayna@epa.gov
- Press release from Bridgestone/Firestone on its wildlife habitat project:
<http://www.bridgestone-firestone.com/news/corporate/news/2003/030519a.htm>